

Remarks at an Independence Day Ceremony in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania July 4, 1993

Thank you very much, President de Klerk, Mr. Mandela, Senator Wofford, distinguished Members of Congress, Mayor Rendell and members of the Philadelphia city government, Judge Higginbotham, Reverend Sullivan, my fellow Americans.

As I flew here today from Washington over the farmlands and the small towns and the cities and I began to land here in Philadelphia, and I could see closely Americans of all kinds enjoying the blessings of liberty and the fruits of their labors, I couldn't help thinking that if the Founding Fathers were with us today, they would be proud of the work that they have done.

I do want to say a special word to two distinguished Pennsylvanians who, but for health reasons, would clearly be here with us today, a word of appreciation to them with whom I talked just a few moments ago, your brave Governor, Bob Casey, engaged in his heroic struggle—we all wish him well—and your distinguished Senator Arlen Specter, who promised me he would be back to work soon. He did not promise me a vote, however. *[Laughter]*

On this, our Nation's birthday in our Nation's birthplace, all of us are part of a truly historic occasion as we welcome these two leaders in the journey to nonracial democracy in South Africa. Here they stand together, the head of state and the former political prisoner. We honor the dedication, the dignity, and the discipline of the ANC president, Nelson Mandela, who walked out of prison after 27 years, astonishingly still unbowed, unbroken, and unembittered. And we salute President de Klerk for his wisdom and his determination in moving to dismantle the destructive system of apartheid and his courage in asking his people to give up something that they have which is not fully legitimate so that they can live together in real harmony, real freedom, and real liberty. That, too, is an act of courage we should honor.

I believe that in their common endeavors they are working together to liberate all South Africans, to restore material wealth, and to bring spiritual health to their beloved country. Many Americans have stood for the cause of freedom in South Africa and now I tell you both: The

United States stands ready to help the people of South Africa as they move forward on the journey of democracy.

Here where our own democracy is born, the United States today reaches out a helping hand to those who would build democracy in South Africa. We stand ready to help with voter education. We stand ready to help to heal the cruel legacies of apartheid, from unemployment to poor housing to inadequate education. We want to be your partner. This week when I travel to the summit of the world's leading industrial nations, I will work to include a new and democratic South Africa in the world economy and our common commitment to it.

And closer to home, my fellow Americans, we must rejoice today in the historic accord reached late last evening to restore democracy and its elected leader, President Aristide, to Haiti. This agreement is a tribute to the dedicated efforts of the United Nations, the OAS, and the United States negotiators and to the resilience of the democratic idea and the commitment of the Haitian people to that idea.

I want to say a special word of thanks to all the Members of Congress, including the Congressional Black Caucus who worked so hard to put the United States on the side of democracy in Haiti. This is their victory, too. I called President Aristide this morning to express my congratulations and my appreciation for his signing the peace accord, and he and I agreed that today we could both wish each other happy Independence Day.

Earlier today, as Americans have done for 217 years, I had the honor of participating, with two young children who are direct descendants of our Founders, in ringing the Liberty Bell. When that bell first tolled, it rang with the moral force of the most powerful common idea humanity has ever known: the idea that each of us stands equal before God and must therefore be equal before the law; the idea that our human dignity is given to us not by any government but by God; the idea that we must be citizens, not subjects, proud participants in the democratic process of governing ourselves and building our own future. It is that which we celebrate and hope for in South Africa, in Haiti,

and throughout the rest of the world today and that which we must still work to perfect in our own Nation today. Because, even after 217 years, no one would say we have got it entirely right yet.

Still, none can deny that this Nation has survived and succeeded for more than two centuries because at every crucial moment we have had the courage to change, to make difficult but necessary decisions, and still to be faithful to the unchanging ideals which gave birth to us. Thomas Jefferson wrote that blistering Declaration of Independence knowing that his ideals challenged his country to change. He thought of the immorality of slavery in America when he wrote, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." When Abraham Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation, he gave our Nation's bloodiest conflict a sacred, moral purpose, to turn the promises of the Declaration and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights into living realities for all our people.

It is a struggle we are still waging. Still, we struggle to live in a way that will please a just God. Still, we struggle to live in a way that we can secure for every American, without regard to race or region or station in life, the blessing of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Still, we struggle to find ways to extend a helping hand of freedom to people throughout the world. No less than those who founded our Republic or fought to keep it together in the Civil War, we too, must have the vision and courage to change, to preserve our unchanging purposes in a dynamic and difficult world.

This is not just another nation that we live in. It is the noblest effort at self-government and continuous change the world has ever known. Here, people from every continent and every country come, believing that they can build a new life for themselves and a better future for their children. America embodies the idea that a nation can be built by the people of every other nation and still be a beacon of hope and inspiration to the world and still prove that out of all that diversity can become a deeper strength and unity founded on the ideals that we celebrate on the Fourth of July.

To keep that promise, we must continue to lead the world, not only politically and morally but economically as well. And all of you know, my fellow Americans, that is our great challenge today, when most of our people are worried about their own jobs and their own incomes,

the security of their health care, the safety of their streets, the educational future of their children, the challenges to our deepest values here in our own homes, and the challenges to our position around the world.

The brave band who invented our country 217 years ago faced a difficult future with hope. Today, we are bombarded constantly with the magnitude and complexity of our problems, with the foibles of our problem-solvers, with the message that things may not be able to get better. Too many people are gripped by doubt when we need confidence. They are gripped by cynicism when we need hope and faith and conviction.

My fellow Americans, on this Fourth of July look at these two men standing here making world history. Cynicism is a luxury the American people cannot afford. Of course, there is much to question and to worry about. But I ask you to remember here today, this Nation has endured and triumphed over a bloody Civil War, two World Wars, the Great Depression, the civil rights struggle, riots in our streets, economic problems, and social discord at home and great challengers abroad. And we are still here, still leading the way, still looking toward tomorrow. Cynicism is a luxury we cannot afford. It defeats us before we begin. It is our job to carry on this great tradition.

Make no mistake about it, as long as we have faith in the future and the courage to change, our Nation is still unstoppable. I believe we have a future where our ideas continue to be the inspiration for the world, where our system continues to be a model for the world, where our economy, if we do what we need to do, can once again be the envy of the world. All around us, democracy and markets are on the rise, a new global economy is emerging, and we welcome the challenges that it brings. This new economy is built on innovation. But America has always been the home of the great inventors, from Philadelphia's own Ben Franklin to the geniuses today who build new computer hardware and write software in their basements and garages.

The new economy is built on education. And America has always been a home to education, from Thomas Jefferson, from those to the wonderful universities in this great city who educate our young people there and reach out to those in the inner-city schools. The new economy is built on flexibility and change. We are, my

friends, a nation born in revolution and renewed through constant change. We can do what we have to do today to renew the American dream.

The genius of our democracy is that we the people are capable of self-government, capable of difficult choices, capable of making the changes that each time demands. Through the miracle of democracy, we are attempting to do just that today, to gain control of our economic destiny, reduce our terrible budget deficit, invest in our future, and do it in a way that is fair and that will work.

In just a couple of days, I will go to Tokyo to represent all of you in a meeting of the world's great industrial nations to work with them to get this economy moving again and to create jobs and opportunity for our people and for theirs as well. We will be able to go there with our heads held high because, for all of our difficult problems, we are moving: almost a million new jobs in 1993, lower interest rates at home, and a sense that things can get better if we keep at it. After long periods of division and denial, we are as a people rising to the occasion to put our house in order. And now we can say with an outstretched hand of friendship to our friends: We have made tough choices; so must you. And together, we can offer opportunity to our people again. Let us stop pointing the finger of blame and assume responsibility and lift the human natures and the human potential of people throughout the world. That is the job we will face in Tokyo.

My fellow Americans, in the shadow of this building let us remember that once, here, patriots and visionaries pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Today I tell you that we must pledge ourselves to make sure this changing world changes fundamentally for the better. Old injustices are ending; new opportunities and challenges are emerging. And to-

gether, we can make the years ahead the best years our Nation has ever had if we can rise above cynicism and doubt, if we can see through the siren's songs of the easy answers of the moment, if we can remember that from the beginning our people have always known that Government could not solve all the problems and that all citizens had to be responsible to build this Nation together.

Today we celebrate these two leaders who have advanced the cause of freedom in South Africa and, to be sure, they have advanced the cause of freedom throughout the world. Tonight, from parks and waterfronts, in backyards, all of us here in America will see our skies brightened by the celebration of our own freedom. It will lift the spirits of people throughout this country and throughout the world who yet yearn to see and breathe and feel that freedom. Let this celebration remind us that democracy is a promise for each of us to keep, a promise to be Americans in the best sense of the word, to be citizens, not spectators, to do the best we can in our families, our jobs, our communities, to shoulder the burden of responsibility, not point the finger of blame. This was the promise our founders made in this place on this day two centuries ago. To keep that tradition, we must be believers and builders. And so must we be every day, starting here, right now, today. Let us resolve to do it.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. in Independence Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward G. Rendell of Philadelphia; Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, retired, Third Circuit Court of Appeals; and Rev. Leon Sullivan, founder and president of Opportunities Industrialization Center and leader in the antiapartheid movement.

Remarks at a Town Meeting in Eldridge, Iowa July 4, 1993

The President. Thank you very much. Folks, this is supposed to be informal, so I'm going to sit down if you don't mind. That introduction you just heard is a good illustration of Clinton's first law of politics, which is whenever possible,

get somebody you've appointed to high office to introduce you. They'll lie about you every time. *[Laughter]*

I'm glad to be here with your secretary of agriculture, your secretary of state, and your